

Claims:

1. A workstation for producing a printed article using a transferable marking substance, said workstation comprising:
 - a workstation frame;
 - an output device supported on said frame, said output device adapted to output a transfer sheet having an image formed thereon from the transferable marking substance; and,
 - a transfer press supported on said frame, said transfer press having a heating element suitable for transferring the marking substance from said sheet to the article.
2. A workstation according to claim 1 further comprising a heat dissipation element supported on said frame and suitable for receiving heat from the article.
3. A workstation according to claim 1 further comprising an input device for receiving said image, said input device being supported on said frame and in communication with said output device for transferring data corresponding to said image to said output device.
4. A workstation according to claim 3 further comprising a processor in communication with said input device, said processor adapted to receive said image from said input device and output data corresponding to a mirror image of said received image to said output device.
5. A workstation according to claim 1 further comprising an alignment fixture supporting the article within said transfer press.
6. A workstation according to claim 5, wherein said alignment fixture has an alignment guide and said transfer sheet is cooperable with said alignment guide to position said image on said transfer sheet along the article as desired.

7. A workstation according to claim 6, wherein said alignment guide is a peripheral edge of said alignment fixture.

8. A retail system for producing a printed article having a customer-provided image, said retail system comprising:

an image input device for receiving the customer-provided image;

a processor in communication with said image input device, said processor adapted to output data corresponding to a mirror image of the provided image from said input device;

an output device in communication with said processor and adapted to receive said data corresponding to said mirror image, said output device suitable for producing a transfer sheet having said mirror image formed thereon from a quantity of transferable dye; and,

a transfer press having a heating element adapted to transfer said dye on said transfer sheet to the article thereby forming the provided image thereon.

9. A retail kiosk for production and sale of a printed article having a customer-provided image, said kiosk comprising:

a kiosk structure;

a storage device supported on said structure for receiving a digitized version of the customer-provided image;

a processor supported on said structure and in communication with said storage device, said processor adapted to output data corresponding to a mirror image of said digitized version of the customer-provided image;

an output device supported on said structure and in communication with said processor, said output device adapted to output a transfer sheet having said mirror image thereon formed from a quantity of transferable dye; and,

a transfer press supported on said structure and having a heating element suitable for transferring said dye onto an unprinted surface of an article.

10. A retail kiosk according to claim 9 further comprising a transaction recording device operatively associated with said structure and suitable for recording a sales transaction with a customer for the printed article.

11. A retail kiosk according to claim 9, wherein said kiosk structure is a single, free-standing structure.

12. A heat dissipation element adapted for operative association with a transfer printing workstation, said heat dissipation element comprising a body having a substantially planar top wall and a bottom wall, said bottom wall including a heat transfer surface increasing the surface area of said body.

13. A heat dissipation element according to claim 12, wherein said transfer surface includes a groove extending into said body.

14. A heat dissipation element according to claim 12, wherein said body is formed from a metallic material having a coefficient of thermal conductivity of at least about $40 \text{ W/m} \cdot \text{K}$.

15. A transfer printing fixture for use in operative association with an unprinted article and a printed transfer sheet having a peripheral edge, said fixture comprising:

a lower portion having a first peripheral edge;

an upper portion having a second peripheral edge; and,

a cavity formed in at least one of said lower portion and said upper portion, said cavity dimensioned to receive at least a portion of the unprinted article;

at least one of said first and second peripheral edges being accessible such that the peripheral edge of the transfer sheet can be aligned therewith.

16. A transfer printing fixture according to claim 15, wherein said first and second peripheral edges extend along one of an inside wall and an outside wall of said lower and upper portions.

17. A transfer printing fixture according to claim 15, wherein said base portion is formed from a substantially rigid material and has a first opening at least partially forming said cavity.

18. A transfer printing fixture according to claim 17, wherein said substantially rigid material is one of a polymeric material and a metallic material.

19. A transfer printing fixture according to claim 17, wherein said upper portion is formed from a compressible material and has a second opening at least partially forming said cavity.

20. A transfer printing fixture according to claim 19, wherein said compressible material is a heat-resistant silicon rubber foam.